

111 19TH STREET, N. W.  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

CIA 1-01/10/1981  
Executive Registry  
81-6733

March 13, 1981

The Editor  
New York Times  
229 West 43rd Street  
New York, New York 10036

Dear Sir:

In composing its March 12 editorial, "Son of Operation Chaos", the Times appears to have had a vested interest in supporting its December 1974 trumpeting that CIA engaged in a "massive domestic intelligence operation", which turned out not to be so massive after all. One would have hoped that the Times would have reflected the conclusions of the investigations that followed that charge rather than saying that the CIA in the past "thought nothing of opening the mail of innocent citizens, illegally searching homes and infiltrating political organizations."

The record of the investigations showed, on the contrary, that the CIA's steps over proper lines were few and far between, undertaken only after considerable soul-searching. The letter openings, for example, were essentially limited to mail between the Soviet Union and the United States, in search of leads to Soviet agents in this country. The improper entries involved investigations of CIA employees and ex-employees reportedly involved with foreign intelligence agents. A total of three CIA agents reported on American organizations which they joined to go abroad to determine whether secret foreign assistance was coming to them, a question the CIA answered in the negative. The Times editorial also stated that "Presidents finally cracked down on these abuses," although the record is clear that the CIA itself terminated them before they were questioned by outsiders.

The most exasperating part of this Times' effort to produce a "Son of Rogue Elephant" scenario is its seizing upon a preliminary draft by a subordinate official, before responsible authorities reviewed it, and resting its editorial upon its provisions. This is as though a first draft of one of your journalist's copy was used as a judg-

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ment of the good sense and integrity of the New York Times before your editor had had a chance to review it.

The CIA certainly should operate under clear rules that will fully guarantee the Constitutional rights of our citizens. But equally, the Times should foreswear the kind of hysterical Chicken-Little exaggerations which, rather than regulatory directives, were the real sources of the serious wounds our intelligence services suffered these past five years.

Let's give President Reagan and the fine new leadership he has appointed to CIA a chance to apply the Rockefeller Commission's conclusions as they revive our intelligence services and judge them on what they do, not what some subordinate suggests they might do.

Sincerely,

STATINTL

W.E. Colby

*Bill -*  
*I hope it helps*  
*a bit - with all*  
*best to you*  
WILLIAM E. COLBY  
REID & PRIEST  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW  
1111 19TH STREET, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036  
(202) 628-0100